



Coastal
Conservancy

Strategic Plan

2018-2022

DRAFT
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Introduction

Welcome to the State Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan for 2018 through 2022. The Plan presents how we accomplish our work, key drivers shaping the landscape in which we work, our accomplishments, and our view of the future of the California coast and its watersheds over the next five years—including the steps needed to respond to climate change and promote environmental equity and justice. The Plan also provides a policy reference, an overview of our priorities, a delineation of coastal issues by region, and a summary of our financial status and needs.

Mission Statement

The State Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. We act with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Importance of our Work to the People of California

California is blessed with one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world. The coast is an environmental, recreational, and economic asset for our state, attracting tourists and enriching our quality of life. Two out of every three Californians lives in a coastal county and millions of visitors come to our coast each year. California beaches are one of the state's most prized recreational amenities. Wetlands, sand dunes, lagoons, and other coastal natural resources provide important habitat for rare species, nurseries for our commercial fisheries, and flood protection for our communities. Coastal watersheds provide clean water, support important forest lands, and are critical habitat for salmon and other fish.

The people of California have long recognized the value of our coast and have consistently supported stewardship of its resources. In the 1960s, environmental activists prompted legislation to protect the shoreline of San Francisco Bay, and in the 1970s, California voters enacted Proposition 20, a grass-roots initiative to preserve the natural beauty of the outer coast. Together these laws established that the coast and bay are important natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of all of the people of California. Proposition 20 states:

it is the policy of the State to preserve, protect, and where possible, to restore the resources of the coastal zone for the enjoyment of the current and succeeding generations

The love that Californians have for their coast has not diminished since then. In a 2017 poll, 89% of Californians agreed that the California Coast, including beaches and the ocean, are personally important to them. 70% of Californians visit the coast at least once per year, 69% wish they could visit more often, and 76% agreed that even when they are not visiting, they feel a strong connection to the California coast.

California manages its coastal resources with two strong regulatory agencies that limit harmful impacts to coastal resources: the [California Coastal Commission](#) (Commission), which regulates

development along the state's coastline; and the [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission](#) (BCDC), which regulates development of the San Francisco Bay shoreline. However, one of the strengths of California's strategy for coastal protection is that it does not rely on regulation alone. The State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) was created in 1976 to complement the regulatory agencies by working with partners to protect and enhance coastal resources and improve public access to the coast. (Appendix A lists the Conservancy's statutory authorities.) The Conservancy has played a critical role in shaping the coastal landscape that we see today. Since its creation, the Conservancy has worked with others to complete more than 2,400 projects, building hundreds of miles of trails, constructing scores of public access facilities, and preserving hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, coastal farmland, redwood forests and scenic open space. Many of the most-loved scenic, natural, and recreational resources of the California coast and the San Francisco Bay Area have been protected by the work of the Conservancy and its many partners.

Map

The Conservancy's jurisdiction covers 49,770 square miles, or approximately 30% of California's area, and is home to 27,847,000 Californians, or approximately 75% of the population.



Purpose of this Plan

This Strategic Plan is intended to serve several audiences. It is a policy reference for the Conservancy Board and its staff, providing an overall vision and identifying specific metrics to measure the effectiveness of our work. The plan provides members of the legislature with an overview of the Conservancy's priorities in the context of California's coastal management program. It is also a reference for the California Natural Resources Agency to assist in the coordination of the Conservancy's work with other agencies and departments working to conserve California's natural heritage. The plan is intended to provide control agencies such as the Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst, and State Auditor with an explanation of the Conservancy's priorities and context for our projected staff and funding needs. Finally, and equally important, the plan is intended to communicate to our partners – local governments, state and federal agencies, tribes, private landowners, nonprofit conservation organizations, and private conservation funders – and to the general public the future role of the Conservancy in protecting coastal resources.

Context for this plan

How We Work

The Conservancy is a problem-solving agency, emphasizing accomplishment. In order to complete successful projects, the Conservancy has led many regional and local planning efforts to engage local communities and other interested parties in finding solutions to multi-faceted coastal resource challenges.

- The Conservancy works on behalf of Californians, developing innovative projects to enhance coastal resources and increase public access for the benefit of all.
- The Conservancy works on a range of geographic scales to plan and implement projects that achieve multiple objectives, such as restoration of habitats, completion of trails and recreational amenities, climate resilience, and economic enhancement of urban waterfronts.
- The Conservancy strives to promote environmental equity and justice for the underserved, including disadvantaged communities, persons with disabilities, tribes, and others, through our work to restore habitats and watersheds, provide public access and recreational opportunities, and increase resilience to climate change.
- The Conservancy employs the best available science for each project, subjecting its projects to independent scientific review when appropriate.
- The Conservancy employs innovative techniques in resolving land use conflicts, developing plans, and implementing projects.
- The Conservancy staff adds value by its combination of technical knowledge, commitment to community involvement, skill at communicating the needs of the coast and San Francisco Bay region to decision makers, and experience in helping to address coastal issues.
- The Conservancy works through transparent, public processes and Conservancy projects are discussed and acted upon by its Board with a full opportunity for public involvement.
- The Conservancy works with California tribes to protect tribal resources and to address tribal concerns in the planning and development of projects.
- The Conservancy strives to accomplish projects in a helpful and effective manner.

Stakeholder Survey

In preparing this Strategic Plan and to help identify our future priorities, the Conservancy reached out to over 500 stakeholders from local, state, and federal agencies; nonprofits and land trusts; tribes; and elected offices. Over 200 of them completed our online survey which asked about the Conservancy's strengths, weaknesses, and objectives. We asked them to describe the Conservancy in a single word and below is a word cloud showing their responses (size reflects frequency of response).



Feedback in the survey was overwhelmingly positive: the Conservancy is viewed as an effective, collaborative, essential partner in conservation, stewardship, public access, and climate resilience work in California. There were concerns expressed about the increasing administrative processes required to access Proposition 1 funding, but the Conservancy is still viewed as flexible and helpful.

When survey participants were asked to rank Conservancy objectives, those that involve protecting lands, restoring habitats, and restoring watersheds received highest rankings, followed closely by environmental justice, education, climate change, public access, and working lands goals. Survey participants were asked, “In the next five years, what do you think the top priority of the Conservancy should be?” and many listed more than one priority or focused on achieving multiple objectives. Land conservation, habitat restoration, climate change, and public access were the most frequently mentioned, followed by environmental justice, education, and watersheds. Participants also frequently called for the Conservancy to support the work of partners, provide leadership, and generate and distribute funding. Examples of responses include:

- *Lead the conversation about how coastal communities will need to adapt to climate change so that public access and public lands are not lost as the result of sea level rise.*
- *Providing access and education (as it will leverage conservation good beyond our wildest dreams).*
- *Protecting more land that provides multiple benefits including wildlife habitat protection (particularly to build climate change resilience and to maintain wildlife corridors)...*
- *Protect and restore coastal watersheds, enhancing estuary and lagoon habitat, inform climate change adaptation to sea level rise and integrated approaches to coastal communities.*
- *Working with coastal communities on access for all, affordable overnight accommodations and study of impacts of sea level rise.*
- *Public access to the coast FOR ALL.*

When asked, “What two things do you like about working with the Conservancy?”, the most frequent response was the staff, stated in some manner by 60% of respondents. Staff were described as knowledgeable, helpful, easy to work with, responsive, flexible, and professional. Another frequent set of responses revolved around the type of work that the Conservancy does, the Conservancy’s emphasis on accomplishing projects, and the funding made available to undertake projects. Examples include:

- *The emphasis on "doing"- putting projects in the ground.*
- *Their proactive approach and their willingness to partner to get things done.*
- *Clear programs that are accessible and that support innovative ideas/approaches.*
- *Strategic vision: Small agency with big vision and the creativity to solve big problems.*

- *The Conservancy's approach is always "how do we get this done?", not "there are too many barriers to get this done."*

Survey participants were also asked, "What are two ways the Conservancy could improve how it works to accomplish projects?" and primarily responded with suggestions on improving grant processes, specific revisions to priorities, increasing engagement and partnerships, increasing funding and/or staff, and increasing outreach and communication efforts. Examples include:

- *I believe the grant application process could be streamlined.*
- *Ease of grant billing and reporting.*
- *Meet with partner organizations more often to understand local and regional priorities.*
- *Have more funds and more staff to help implement projects with those funds.*
- *Build a public awareness of your responsibilities and successes.*
- *Make more grant funds available for urban projects.*
- *Focus attention to rural areas of the state.*

Key Drivers

There are five key drivers that will frame the future work of the Conservancy and that have been woven throughout the Strategic Plan. Two of these are large-scale, global drivers that are being faced by society broadly: 1) the increasing impacts of sea level rise and climate change on coastal communities and natural resources; and 2) the disproportionate barriers to health, resilience, and wellbeing faced by underserved populations in California. Three additional drivers are more specific to the operations of the Conservancy: 1) the outlook for funding for the operations, programs, and projects of the Conservancy; 2) the increase in state grant programs that have overlapping objectives with the Conservancy; and 3) the future of federal funding for conservation work on the California coast.

Global Drivers

Sea Level Rise and Climate Change

The Conservancy takes climate change into account in all of our planning and investment decisions, and also strives to increase the resilience of natural and built communities to climate change through multi-objective adaptation projects. The Conservancy's Climate Ready Program supports planning to better understand vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies along the coast and implementation of projects that use natural infrastructure as an adaptation strategy to protect natural resources and public access into the future. These projects serve as models for coastal communities throughout California.

Rapid climate change will affect human welfare and threaten critical infrastructure. The inevitable impacts of climate change are key drivers in all of the Conservancy's work. Every type of project that the Conservancy supports will be affected by a changing climate. Public

recreational facilities, including trails, parklands, and piers, as well as urban waterfronts, will eventually be at risk from flooding and erosion due to sea level rise and extreme weather events. Lands that provide open space, support agriculture, and provide habitat for an abundance of species will be affected by warming temperatures and altered precipitation. Urban parks and forests will be important green infrastructure to reduce impacts of extreme heat.

Sea-level rise in particular will put human populations, critical infrastructure, and natural resources at risk. The Conservancy will continue to use best available science and current State guidance to develop projects to help communities prepare for these changes. Climate impacts such as more frequent and intense storms paired with rising sea level are increasing flooding, storm surge inundation, wetland and beach loss, and coastal erosion, and are dramatically reshaping the coastline of California. Low-lying coastal areas, such as wetlands, sand dunes, and beaches, are particularly vulnerable to rising seas and increasing waves.

The Conservancy's adopted *Climate Change Policy and Project Selection Criteria* (originally adopted in 2009, updated in November 2011) changed how we conceive, design, and implement projects that are affected by climate change. The Conservancy's legal authority to undertake projects and award grants for projects to address potential and existing climate change impacts was clarified in law through SB 1066, which took effect in 2013. The legislation provides express authority for the Conservancy to undertake projects and award grants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. The Conservancy is directed to maximize public benefits, including, but not limited to, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, reducing hazards to harbors and ports, preserving and enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, conserving biodiversity, and providing recreational opportunities.

The Conservancy works to plan and implement multi-objective coastal conservation and restoration projects in close coordination with local partners and stakeholders, and has the legislative authority to explicitly undertake climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. This combination of factors has positioned the Conservancy well to carry out the Governor's Executive Order B-30-15, which calls for state agencies to take climate change into account in planning and investment decisions, guided by four principles:

- Priority should be given to actions that both build climate preparedness and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Where possible, flexible and adaptive approaches should be taken to prepare for uncertain climate impacts;
- Actions should protect the state's most vulnerable populations; and
- Natural infrastructure should be prioritized.

The Conservancy, through its Climate Ready Program, is focused on climate resilience projects that help to protect natural resources and public access into the future; that use natural

infrastructure as an adaptation strategy; and that demonstrate, through pilot projects, techniques that can be used by other entities up and down the coast. Climate Ready technical assistance from the Conservancy is targeted at communities or populations that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts and that have limited capacity to plan and implement adaptation projects.

Environmental Equity and Justice

The Conservancy strives to benefit all Californians through our projects. There are underserved populations in California (such as disadvantaged communities, persons with disabilities, tribes, and others) that disproportionately confront barriers to health and wellbeing and face increased vulnerability to environmental issues. Our work to restore habitats and watersheds, provide public access and recreational opportunities, and increase resilience to climate change should promote environmental equity and justice.

Three new overarching objectives in this Strategic Plan help to ensure that the work of the Conservancy promotes environmental equity and justice. These objectives include numerical targets, so that the Conservancy's progress can be tracked and reported on annually.

- Prioritize projects for funding that are located in disadvantaged communities or directly benefit disadvantaged communities.
- Increase the resilience to climate change impacts of communities along the coast of California or in the San Francisco Bay Area that lack capacity due to systemic inequities.
- Increase coastal access for all Californians, by supporting organizations that provide coastal experiences to underserved populations, by increasing physical access for persons with disabilities, by providing information about visitor-serving amenities on the coast, and by reducing barriers such as the cost of lodging.

The Conservancy has a long history conducting projects in partnership with underserved communities, but Proposition 1 provided an impetus for addressing equity explicitly in Conservancy grantmaking. A criterion in the evaluation of grant applications to the Conservancy for Proposition 1 funding is the extent to which the project benefits a disadvantaged community. Proposition 1 defines a disadvantaged community as “a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income.” (CA Water Code Section 79505.5.) When scoring grant applications, the Conservancy considers whether the project is located within a disadvantaged community or if the project benefits a disadvantaged community through such things as job training, employment, education, improved water quality or supply, improved air quality, or other public health or economic benefits.

The Conservancy has, as of June 2017, awarded 48 Proposition 1 grants and a total of \$26.3 million. Of these grants, 30 projects and about \$15 million were in disadvantaged communities and another 6 grants and \$2 million were projects that are partially in disadvantaged communities. The Conservancy will continue to evaluate grant applications for Proposition 1 and other funding sources against this criterion and will track and report our progress in supporting projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Equity is also a consideration in the Conservancy's effort to increase public access to the coast. The Conservancy has long worked to open inaccessible stretches of coastline to public use and enjoyment but, increasingly, barriers to coastal access include the cost and difficulty of transportation to the coast, parking, and overnight lodging. In a statewide survey conducted in 2017, 68% of Californians say they wish they could visit the California coast more often, with distance, traffic, transportation, financial reasons, and parking all cited as barriers (60% stated lack of time, the most cited reason). Grants to public agencies and nonprofits for planning and implementation of facilities on the coast improve the convenience, availability, and accessibility of parking, restrooms, trails, and other visitor-serving amenities.

The top-cited barrier to staying overnight at the California coast was cost. There are approximately 17,000 lower-cost (\$112 maximum daily rate; \$123 in the summer) hotel/motel rooms, campsites, cabins, and hostel rooms available on the California coast out of a total of nearly 65,000, or roughly 26%. Of these 17,000 lower-cost overnight accommodations, less than 7,000 are hotel/motel rooms. There is a disparity between the need for lower-cost overnight accommodations and the existing supply. The Conservancy will complete a plan that identifies 1) opportunities to plan and construct campsites, hostels, cabins, and other affordable lodging on public lands or with nonprofits on the coast and 2) innovative programs and partnerships that increase opportunities for low-income Californians to stay overnight on the coast.

Barriers to coastal access disproportionately impact low-income populations and people who live further from the coast. Californians who reported that they go to the coast less than once a year (18%) were more likely to live more than 10 miles inland from the coast (with about 1 out of 5 of such respondents living in the Central Valley) and were likely to come from low income households (about half of such respondents come from families earning less than \$50,000 a year). Those who said they never go to the coast (7%) were more likely to be Hispanic and foreign born (about half of such respondents) and about half were from low income households. About a third of Californians who visit the coast less than once a year (or never) were unfamiliar with coastal amenities. Public outreach tools, such as the Explore the Coast web app and A Wheelchair Rider's Guide to the California Coast, aid Californians who are seeking information about coastal visitation opportunities and accessibility of visitor-serving amenities.

To improve access to the coast and enhance coastal experiences, the Conservancy's Explore the Coast grant program funds transportation and educational or interpretive programs for underserved communities, including youth and their families, low-income communities, persons with disabilities, and tribes. Explore the Coast grant rounds during the past five years have provided nearly \$5 million to 166 projects by nonprofits and public agencies. Feedback from grantees and project participants has been overwhelmingly positive and the Conservancy will continue to run the Explore the Coast grant program as long as funding is available.

Persons with disabilities face multiple barriers to coastal access that the Conservancy can address through improvements to facilities, programs, and activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that mandates an equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in everyday life. The primary responsibility of the Conservancy with regard to the ADA is to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities; this includes physical access to the built environment, means of obtaining information, and participation in programs offered by the Conservancy. The Conservancy is committed to improving accessibility to the California coast for people with disabilities and ensuring equal access to our agency's programs, services, and activities.

The Conservancy has expanded its outreach to tribes and adopted a Tribal Consultation Policy in accordance with Governor Brown's Executive Order B-10-11 and guidance from the Natural Resources Agency. The goal of the policy is to ensure the Conservancy provides consistent, effective opportunities for formal and informal consultation with California's tribes and tribal entities in the development of Conservancy projects.

Operational Drivers

State Funding for Operations, Programs, and Projects

The last Strategic Plan included a goal to implement a sustainable funding strategy for the Conservancy. For the past fifteen years, the budget to support the Conservancy's operations has primarily come from a small administrative percentage of resource bond funds. The agency has made significant progress in reducing the support budget and bringing in outside funds for staff via grants to stabilize and diversify funding for its operation. Staff is continuing to work in finding sustainable baseline funding for its operations and this is still a key driver for the agency.

During the past five years, the Conservancy has worked to develop new sources of funding to support the agency's projects and its on-going operation:

- The Conservancy has supported sustainable forest projects that will generate proceeds from the sale of the carbon credits.
- The Conservancy has supported the development of a carbon sequestration protocol for wetland projects, although the values associated with wetland projects will not likely be a major source of funding.
- The Conservancy is providing staff support to the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. The Authority was successful in passing a regional ballot measure that will generate \$500 million for wetland restoration projects over the next 20 years.
- Through the southern California Wetland Recovery Project, the Conservancy is developing a regional in-lieu fee programs under which it would collect and administer mitigation funds in southern California. The Conservancy will administer some of the interim mitigation funds generated by the once through cooling power plants.
- The Conservancy is partnering with the Marin Community Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to administer funds for climate adaptation and living shoreline projects in San Francisco Bay.

The sources above will provide some resources to some projects but, absent a new funding source, the Conservancy will spend most of its remaining project funds during this Strategic Plan. About \$150 million for projects remains from the Conservancy's previous bond allocations, primarily Proposition 84 and Proposition 1. Proposition 84, approved in November 2006, provided \$360 million for the Conservancy's programs, including specific allocations for the San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Ana River, Monterey Bay, and San Diego Bay. Most of the Proposition 84 funds have already been granted to nonprofits and public agencies, to accomplish hundreds of conservation and access projects. The remaining Proposition 84 funds remaining will likely be awarded by 2022. Proposition 1, approved in November 2014, included \$100.5 million for the Conservancy to fund multi-benefit water quality, water supply, watershed protection and restoration projects. At the current rate of spending, the Conservancy will have allocated all of the Proposition 1 funds by 2022. Proposition 1 funds cannot be used to implement projects related to the Conservancy's goals for public access or recreation; funds for these projects have become increasingly scarce. For the past 27 years, the Conservancy has received \$4 million each year from the Habitat Conservation Fund. That fund was created by initiative and it will sunset in 2019. Finally, the Conservancy had been receiving a small part of the California Beach and Coastal Access Account Funds generated by the Whale Tail License Plates. The Coastal Commission now uses all of those funds for their public education staff and their grant program.

The funding levels for Conservancy projects may be augmented sometime during the 2018-2022 timeframe of this Strategic Plan. There are currently several legislative and initiative-based proposals for resource bonds in development. It is impossible to predict which of these, if any, will be placed on a statewide ballot for consideration by the voters of California. For purposes of developing numerical targets for our Strategic Plan objectives, the Conservancy assumed that there would be approximately \$150-200 million in additional funding approved in 2018 or 2019, that these funds would support the wide array of Conservancy programs, and that the funds would be appropriated over a ten-year timeframe. Without this assumption, the numerical targets for public access objectives, such as trails and recreational facilities, would be close to zero, and the targets for habitat and watershed protection and restoration would be lower than shown in this plan.

While project funding is an essential ingredient for success, the Conservancy achieves its objectives using many strategies. There continue to be many ways that the Conservancy can help preserve the resources of the coast and improve public access beyond granting funds for projects, including support for coordinated permitting processes to expedite project implementation, facilitating regional collaborations, identifying and applying for alternative sources of project funding, and increasing outreach and communication efforts. As long as funding continues for operations of the agency, the Conservancy can continue to provide leadership on coastal conservation issues, including sustaining partnerships to leverage our resources and broaden support for our programs. This work is particularly important given the climate change impacts facing coastal resources and communities.

Overlapping State Grant Programs

Since the last Strategic Plan, several other state agencies have started grant programs that directly overlap with the Conservancy's programs. For example, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Ocean Protection Council, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy now all have grant programs to fund wetland restoration within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. This overlap increases the need for coordination among the agencies, such as when staff are reviewing grant applications and making funding recommendations. The Conservancy must also consider its unique niche in the context of these other, overlapping state grant programs. Elements of how the Conservancy works that distinguish our agency from others include: 1) the engagement of Conservancy staff in long-term partnerships dedicated to planning and implementing large-scale programs and innovative pilot projects, and 2) a focus on accomplishing multi-objective projects at multiple geographic scales and over many years or decades.

The Conservancy has long distinguished itself as effectively accomplishing coastal conservation, climate adaptation, and public access projects through engagement with grantees and involvement in funded projects. Project partners have expressed that the Conservancy should continue to provide grant funding in a way that prioritizes outcomes over process and, where needed, engage actively in projects in a way that provides support and leadership. The Conservancy's role in achieving conservation successes includes:

- A willingness to start new projects and fund early planning.
- Facilitating and coordinating regional collaborations to develop plans, address emerging issues, and identify and implement recommended plan priorities.
- Identifying alternative sources of funding and securing grant funds to support our projects.
- Providing leadership on innovative pilot projects, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Resolving potential permit roadblocks and coordinating agencies (such as facilitating joint agency review of projects) to support implementation of regionally important projects.

The Conservancy's statutory authorities are broader than many other grant programs administered by state agencies. For example, mandated objectives include both protection and restoration of wildlife habitat as well as the provision of public trails and recreational facilities. The Conservancy has a successful track record of working with others to plan and implement projects that achieve multiple objectives, such as increased wildlife habitat, improved water quality, enhanced flood protection, increased public access, workforce development, environmental education, greenhouse gas sequestration, and economic benefits to local communities. The Conservancy will maintain an emphasis on funding multi-objective projects, from small, pilot projects to landscape-scale programs, and from early conceptual planning through implementation and adaptive management.

Future of Federal Funding for Conservation

The change of administration at the federal level in January of 2017 may reduce the role of federal agencies in conservation during the time period for this plan. The State of California and

local agencies and nonprofits will need to step up efforts to protect and restore the California coast and prepare for climate change impacts.

Funding for multiple federal environmental programs will likely shrink from levels over the past decade. This includes funding for land management by National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, and Bureau of Land Management; funding for science by federal agencies such as USGS and NOAA; as well as federal grant programs to states and local entities. EPA grant programs for wetlands restoration and NOAA funding for coastal zone management and climate resilience, which have both been major sources of support for Conservancy projects and operations, face reductions or elimination. Annual appropriations for cost-shared ecosystem restoration projects with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will likely be harder to secure. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants for coastal wetlands, which the Conservancy has been very successful at obtaining, may be better positioned to continue as they are funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which is supported by excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. In short, it is highly unlikely that federal conservation funds will increase or even remain level during the timeframe of this Strategic Plan, which affects both Conservancy projects and operations.

In addition to decreased funding for conservation, federal safeguards that protect our coast and ocean may decrease. During 2017, review processes began for National Monuments and National Marine Sanctuaries designated in the past decade that could result in reduced protection for these coastal lands and waters. Federal regulatory protections for clean air, clean water, endangered species, and coastal lands are subject to administrative changes. The United States is withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement, a voluntary agreement among nearly all of the world's countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Conservancy's work to protect and restore coastal resources and help local communities prepare for sea level rise continues to be essential. However, the expected reduced levels of federal funding will impact what the Conservancy can accomplish over the next five years.

Accomplishments

Over the past four decades, the voters of California have entrusted the Conservancy with \$1.3 billion in funds to protect coastal resources and improve public access to the coast. These funds have allowed the Conservancy and its partners to implement 2,400 projects, protecting more than 390,000 acres of coastal lands, opening 200 new coastal accessways, building more than 210 miles of trails, and enhancing more than 33,000 acres of coastal habitat. Since 2000, 29% of the Conservancy's grant funding has been spent on projects within disadvantaged communities.

In the past five years, many projects were able to be implemented as a result of state funds, in particular, Proposition 84 and Proposition 1 funds. Numeric tables showing the Conservancy's accomplishments under the last strategic plan are provided in Appendix B.

Listed below are examples of the major projects that the Coastal Conservancy has helped implement.

Connecting People to the Coast

Explore the Coast: Since 2013, the Conservancy has awarded nearly \$5 million in 166 separate grants for programs that encourage all Californians to explore and experience our spectacular coast. These grants provide coastal experiences to lower-income or other underserved populations; increase the number of people visiting the coast; improve access for persons with disabilities; provide valuable recreational, environmental, cultural or historic learning experiences; increase stewardship of coastal resources; and enhance the public's coastal experience in a way that does not currently exist.

California Coastal Trail: The Coastal Trail will be a continuous trail along the coast from the Oregon border to the Mexican Border. During the last five years, the Conservancy helped construct 125 miles of new trail all along the coast including new segments in almost every coastal county. Highlights include new Coastal Trail in Fort Bragg in Mendocino County and at Devil's Slide in San Mateo County, as well as installation of a large Coastal Trail mile-marker in Laguna Beach.

Building Regional Trails

San Francisco Bay Trail: A planned 500-mile walking and biking trail around the San Francisco Bay and across its major bridges. The Conservancy has helped complete over 350 miles to date, providing accessible recreation and promoting alternative transportation.

Bay Area Ridge Trail: A planned 550-mile long-distance hiking, biking, and horseback-riding trail along the ridgeline above San Francisco Bay. The Conservancy has helped complete over 370 miles of trail to date.

Santa Ana River Trail: A river parkway that will connect the Inland Empire from the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean near Huntington Beach. The Conservancy is helping build new trail and filling critical gaps to complete the 100-mile parkway, providing a continuous multi-use trail that connects three counties and 17 cities.

Restoring Coastal Wetlands and Watersheds

Humboldt Bay/Eel River Delta: A suite of wetland restoration projects that improve habitat for fish and wildlife, protect and enhance agricultural land, and assist with adaptation to projected sea level rise. Key projects include the Salt River Restoration Project, McDaniel Slough and Arcata Baylands Restoration, and enhancement planning for the Eel River Preserve, Ocean Ranch, and Elk River Estuary.

Hamilton and Bel Marin Keys Wetlands: A nationally-significant restoration project that involves the use of clean dredged sediment from ports to convert a former military airfield into a mosaic of wetland habitats. The one-square mile Hamilton Airfield was opened to tidal action in 2014 and is evolving into tidal marsh with significant fish and bird use, and the next phase of restoration is underway at adjacent Bel Marin Keys, preparing the site to receive dredged material.

South Bay Salt Pond Restoration: The largest wetland restoration project on the West Coast. Nearly 15,000 acres of former commercial salt ponds are being restored or enhanced as wetlands habitat, flood protection is being improved for Silicon Valley and other communities in the South and East Bay, and Bay Trail segments and other recreational amenities are being created. To date, 3,750 acres have been restored or enhanced and 7 miles of new trail constructed. Construction will start on approximately 6,000 acres within the next five years.

Carmel River Restoration: The San Clemente Dam was a 106-foot high dam on the Carmel River that had impeded fish passage and sediment transport for almost 100 years. With leadership from the Conservancy and large number of public and private partners, the dam was removed in 2015 – the largest dam removed in California to date. Two other downstream barriers were also removed in 2016 – the Old Carmel River Dam and the Sleepy Hollow Ford. These projects are part of a comprehensive effort to revitalize the Carmel River. The Conservancy is continuing to work with partners on efforts to reconnect the river to its floodplain, restore riparian habitat, and expand a river parkway trail that will eventually connect the headwaters of the river in Los Padres National Forest to the Carmel Beach.

Upper Devereux Slough: In 1960, approximately 55 acres of Upper Devereux Slough, a tidal salt marsh, was filled to create the Ocean Meadows Golf Course. For the next six decades it remained a golf course, but flooded every winter as a reminder that it was really a wetland. In 2013, the Conservancy joined others to acquire the property and retire the golf course. The Conservancy provided funding for planning the restoration of 136 acres of Upper Devereux Slough and surrounding lands, and is currently helping to fund implementation of that restoration.

Malibu Lagoon Restoration: Malibu Lagoon is a 31-acre site at the mouth of Malibu Creek that had been severely impacted by the dumping of fill generated in the course of constructing Pacific Coast Highway and other development projects. Home to many endangered fish and bird species, the Lagoon badly needed restoration in order to provide a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Working with others, the Conservancy helped design and fund the habitat restoration and public access features at the site. Completed in 2013, on-going monitoring has shown increased abundance and diversity of species.

Protecting Important Coastal Resource Lands

Kashia Pomo Coastal Preserve: The Kashia Pomo Coastal Preserve is a highly scenic 688-acre coastal property adjacent to Highway 1 in northern Sonoma County that contains redwood forests, coastal meadows and a mile of coastline adjacent to Salt Point State Park. The Conservancy worked with the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians and other partners to acquire the property, return stewardship of ancestral lands to the Kashia, and provide an alignment for one mile of new coastal trail. The Conservancy subsequently provided additional funds to initiate trail design.

Carr Lake: Carr Lake is a 480-acre seasonally dry lake bed in the heart of the City of Salinas that serves as an important component of the regional stormwater control system in the winter and has been farmed during the dry season. The Conservancy partnered to acquire a 73-acre portion of Carr Lake. The acquisition is the first step toward a long-term dream to transform Carr Lake into a “central park” for Salinas, while also reducing flood risk, enhancing natural habitat, and improving the water quality of Monterey Bay.

Puerco Canyon: The 703-acre Puerco Canyon property, acquired in 2014, is an outstanding example of the unique Mediterranean biome. Its range of vegetation communities includes chaparral, coastal sage scrub, sycamore-willow woodland, native grasslands, and oak woodland habitat. Conservancy funds helped to complete the acquisition, which provides an important linkage between the 1,000-acre Corral Canyon Park and the 8,000-acre Malibu Creek State Park. The uncommonly gentle terrain makes it ideal for creating a link in the Coastal Slope trail, and it has already been used for camping by school groups and others seeking to enjoy and understand the unique attributes of the site.

Climate Ready

White Slough: The Conservancy helped to implement a 56-acre wetland restoration project on lands within the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The project uses clean sediment from nearby construction and dredging projects to raise the level of a subsided diked marsh, thereby creating a dynamic complex of fresh, brackish and salt marsh while helping to protect Highway 101 from flooding related to anticipated sea level rise.

San Mateo and Marin Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessments: Conservancy funding and staff leadership helped two county-scale efforts to assess and begin preparation for the effects of sea level rise. Each vulnerability assessment has improved integration of local governments around climate change, resulted in new structures and policies, and is spurring more detailed planning for particular risks.

Salinas River State Beach Dune Restoration: The Conservancy provided funds to improve the capacity to adapt to sea level rise and to increased storm intensity of 22 acres of vulnerable sections of coastal dunes through habitat restoration. The coastal dune ecosystem within and

around Salinas River State Beach provides protection from ocean impacts during winter storms to thousands of acres of low-lying agricultural land and wetlands.

Leading Multi-Agency Partnerships

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority: In June of 2016, the voters of the Bay Area made history by passing Measure AA, the first ever regional parcel tax, by an overwhelming 70% approval rate. The Measure will generate \$500 million over the next 20 years to restore San Francisco Bay's wetlands, provide public access to the Bay, and reduce flood risk. The Conservancy played a leading role in this effort and is administering the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority with the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Integrated Watershed Restoration Program: A unique and highly successful multiagency program that assists in identifying, designing, permitting, and implementing watershed restoration projects in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties.

Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Update: A major update was completed in 2015 to the foundational report that has guided wetlands restoration throughout the San Francisco Bay Area since 1999. Focusing on climate change, it has re-oriented efforts towards fostering resilient processes, focusing on sediment deliver, and restoring complete ecological systems.

Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project: An ongoing broad-based partnership to improve coordination, pool resources, and advance the recovery of wetlands in coastal southern California. Since its inception in 2001, Conservancy staff have been very involved in leading this effort and have received federal grant funds to help the support the work.

Regional Context: summaries, major issues, and major efforts

The California coast comprises a diverse landscape, including big cities, small towns, wilderness areas, forests, wetlands, grazing land, and agricultural fields. Reflecting the diversity of the coast, the Conservancy's program is organized into four geographic regions: the North Coast, the Central Coast, the South Coast (including the Santa Ana River), and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Each region has different challenges and opportunities specific to its resources and the needs of its communities. Below are brief summaries of these regions, the major coastal conservation issues they face, and the Conservancy's anticipated priorities for each region.

North Coast

The Conservancy's north coast region extends from windswept beaches in Del Norte County at the Oregon border, south some 370 miles to the spectacular Marin headlands overlooking San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. The rainy climate in the north supports Douglas fir and coast redwood forests, where the tallest and most impressive trees in the world loom overhead, as well as fertile productive bottomlands, important for regional agriculture. Flowing through these forests are California's largest coastal river (the Klamath), California's third largest river system (the Eel), and the longest undammed river (the Smith). Historically, the Klamath and Eel together produced much of the Pacific Coast's salmon and steelhead resources, and they are still important biological engines for salmon recovery. Endangered species found in the area include the northern spotted owl, coho salmon, and marbled murrelet. Farther south, the climate is drier and the vegetation transitions to coniferous forest and California oak woodland in the coast ranges and coastal prairie along the craggy coast. The entire coastline is dotted with estuaries, lagoons and sheltered harbors that provide unique and critical habitats for fish, birds and other wildlife. Many estuaries and river mouths are flanked by dune systems with their own unique flora and fauna.

The north coast region – including the coastal draining watersheds of Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Trinity, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin Counties – is one of the least populated coastal regions in California, with just over one million residents, three quarters of whom reside in Marin and Sonoma Counties. American Indian tribes have made their home within this region for thousands of years and maintain a strong presence. Small cities straddle the two transportation corridors (Highway 1 along the coast and Highway 101 inland) and include Crescent City, Arcata, Eureka, Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Santa Rosa. Family farms, dairies, vineyards, and rolling grasslands with grazing sheep and cattle characterize the nonforested portions of the area.

Stunning natural beauty and abundant recreational opportunities, including paddling, bicycling, hiking, whale watching, and birding make the north coast region a prime destination for visitors from around the world. In fact, despite its small resident population, California State Parks estimated in 2016 that its two northern region districts, North Coast Redwoods and Sonoma-Mendocino Coast, received 11.2 million visitors, 3.6 million of whom visited the nineteen-mile

stretch of coastline at Sonoma Coast State Beach. In 2015, over 2.5 million people visited Point Reyes National Seashore in Marin County.

Major Issues in the North Coast

Watersheds, Forests, and Working Lands

Dramatic social and economic changes are occurring in this region. The legalization of medical marijuana in California in 1996, and the November 2016 legalization of recreational marijuana (Proposition 64) has led to a “green rush” in northern California, driving up rural property prices and creating an incentive for landowners to sell off undeveloped land parcels for marijuana production. This has created a significant impact on the region’s watersheds, and undoubtedly has impacted water resources needed to sustain anadromous fish. In addition to land use conversion, past timber harvest practices have left a legacy of old logging road networks that increase sediment loads in streams, and have created unnatural forest conditions across much of the forested landscape. Dense young forests are at increased risk for catastrophic fires, which can have devastating impacts on watershed resources and rural communities, and sequester less carbon than carefully managed forests. Working lands along the coast, particularly grazing lands in the fertile bottomlands of Humboldt Bay and the Eel River Delta are at risk from projected sea level rise, and in fact some have already been reclaimed by the sea. The Conservancy will continue its work to address these issues by assisting with watershed and wetland planning and restoration, working land conservation easements, and sea level rise adaptation projects.

Anadromous Fish and Coastal Habitats

There are four key harbors on the north coast (Crescent City, Humboldt Bay, Noyo Harbor, and Bodega Bay) and commercial fishing activity annually generates tens of millions of dollars for the region. However, commercial fishing has been hit hard over the last few years. Many fisheries are declining and so is the number of commercial fishing vessels. Severe fluctuations in salmon fishery stocks have resulted in periodic cancellation of commercial and recreational fishing seasons for Chinook salmon. Coho salmon and steelhead populations in the region are federally-listed as threatened or endangered. Many factors have caused the collapse, including drought conditions, silt from historic logging practices, diminished estuarine and off stream refugial habitat, poor water quality, legal and illegal water diversions in coastal watersheds, unfavorable ocean conditions, and water diversions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The crab fishery has also suffered, with periodic closures due to unhealthy levels of domoic acid found in crab. In the southern portion of the region there are continued pressures to convert forests, grasslands, and farmlands to rural residential and agricultural uses, especially vineyards. Sonoma and Mendocino Counties are dominant wine producing regions, and vineyard development has expanded west toward the coast and onto steep slopes. These water-intensive uses in water scarce areas can have serious and cumulative effects on water supply and quality, and the rich biodiversity of the north coast region. The Conservancy will continue its work to remove barriers to fish passage, and restore coastal wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors, and upland habitat conditions for the benefit of the fish and wildlife that depend on them.

Coastal Access

Coastal access and recreation are major draws for visitors to the north coast, and tourism is an important contributor to the North Coast's small local communities. Linking and expanding completed sections of the Coastal Trail is a key goal in the region, providing not only access for visitors, but in some cases also serving as routes for nonmotorized transportation between communities. Providing new access to properties acquired for conservation over the past decade is also a key goal, as is ensuring there are opportunities for traditionally underserved communities to experience the coast throughout the region.

North Coast - Major Efforts in the Next 5 Years:

- Protect and enhance working landscapes throughout the region, and assist with the implementation of management practices that improve carbon sequestration, minimize water use, and protect sensitive habitats;
- Focus fishery restoration efforts on the restoration of basic river processes such as barrier removal, floodplain connectivity and function, water supply, and water quality;
- Design and implement projects that restore wetlands and protect viable agricultural lands in the Lower Eel River and Humboldt Bay area;
- Assist local communities to develop climate change adaptation plans and begin to implement strategies, particularly in the Humboldt Bay region;
- Consider developing and implementing a program to incorporate best management practices into marijuana cultivation for the purposes of protecting watershed and salmonid resources;
- Increase efforts to restore healthy coastal forests;
- Support efforts to develop a diverse stock of lower-cost overnight accommodations;
- Secure new coastal trail right of way from willing sellers;
- Continue construction of the coastal trail and harbor revitalization in Crescent City;
- Continue implementation of the *Humboldt County Coastal Trail Strategy* and the *Humboldt Bay Trail Plan*;
- Implement the final segment of the Arcata/Eureka Rail with Trail Project;
- Continue implementation of the *Strategic Plan for the Coastal Trail in Mendocino County*;
- Finalize design and complete new coastal trail segments in northern Sonoma County and the Bodega Bay area;
- Support efforts to improve public access to protected lands in Sonoma County;
- Protect sensitive habitat and agricultural lands around Tomales Bay;
- Implement public access projects that connect existing trail segments; and
- Support programs that provide coastal access and environmental education throughout the north coast region for underserved youth and adults.

San Francisco Bay Area

Along with being home to over seven million people and an economic engine for the State, the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area hosts a diversity of wildlife and habitats, world-class recreational opportunities, and working farms and ranches. The San Francisco Bay Area

Conservancy Program works to protect and improve these resources in order to support the region's economy and quality of life through protection of our natural infrastructure.

The region is defined by the San Francisco Bay, a 1,600 square mile estuary that drains 40% of California's land and connects to the Pacific Ocean at the Golden Gate. The estuary's edges are a mix of developed areas, including urban waterfronts; ports and marinas; and wetlands used by endangered species, migratory birds, and fish and other aquatic species. The rivers that flow from the Sierra into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta are the Estuary's primary source of freshwater; in addition, numerous creeks and rivers flow directly into San Francisco Bay and are important for steelhead trout and other wildlife.

The spectacular mountains and ridges that ring the Bay form part of the Pacific Coast Range. These mountains include well-known peaks of the Bay Area: Mount Tamalpais, Mount Diablo, Mount Umunhum, and Mount Hamilton. The mountain ranges and valleys of the Bay Area are home to numerous wildlife habitats, including redwood forests, oak woodlands, serpentine grasslands, sycamore groves, willow groves, and seasonal wetlands. These mountains and valleys also contain rich grazing and farming land, which cover 40% of Bay Area lands and contribute to the Bay Area's economy and to a healthy, local food supply.

Major Issues in the Bay Area

The Greenbelt

The Bay Area is famous for its greenbelt of open space, which provides clean air, clean water, local food, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. Over a quarter of the Bay Area's 4.3 million acres are protected, but additional conservation work is needed to sustain the region's unique biodiversity, particularly in the face of climate change impacts. The Conservancy works with others to protect regionally significant habitats, connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and agricultural lands, supporting projects that build upon and connect the existing network of protected lands. Acquisition of fee title and conservation or agricultural easements from willing sellers helps protect land from development. As stewardship of public lands is becoming increasingly challenging, many conservation partners are intensifying their efforts to work with private landowners, including farmers and ranchers, to achieve multiple conservation goals.

Regional Trails and Recreational Opportunities

As the region continues to grow in population, the acreage and accessibility of open space for urban populations needs to keep pace. Access to open space plays a significant role in the Bay Area's high quality of life and opportunities for outdoor recreation contribute to healthy populations. The Conservancy is working with others to complete four regional trails in the Bay Area: the Bay Area Ridge Trail, the San Francisco Bay Trail, the California Coastal Trail, and the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail. In addition, we work to connect regional trails to each other and to communities. Regional trails, and the Bay Trail in particular, can provide alternative transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Conservancy also funds educational and interpretive centers, staging areas, piers, picnic areas, campgrounds,

urban waterfronts, natural play spaces, and other recreational amenities that are accessible to urban populations and connect people to nature.

Bay Habitats

Approximately 85% of the Bay's tidal wetlands have been lost since the Gold Rush. The San Francisco Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report called for restoration of 60,000 acres of tidal wetlands around the Bay to benefit endangered species, migratory birds, fish and aquatic species, water quality, and local flood protection. Currently, nearly 40,000 acres have been acquired and are either being restored or planned for restoration and the Conservancy is playing a lead role in this effort, including staff assistance to the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority to administer Measure AA funds.

Urban Waterfronts

The Conservancy has long played a role in revitalizing urban waterfronts, assisting local communities in the planning and implementation of projects to create jobs and economic benefits through a combination of private enterprises and public facilities that attract visitors. This work continues to be necessary, but is now complicated by the fact that urban waterfronts are on the front lines as sea levels rise. The Pacific Institute estimated that more than \$60 billion worth of infrastructure is at risk in the Bay Area due to sea level rise by 2100. Adaptation strategies have become a significant component of our urban waterfront work and opportunities to test and implement strategies will be a focus of the next five years.

Creeks and Rivers

The creeks and rivers flowing into San Francisco Bay have been dramatically altered due to development, water diversions, and urban runoff. This has negatively impacted water quality and habitat for fish and other aquatic species. We have funded local watershed plans and creek and river restoration efforts. A particular focus is on removing barriers to fish migration and increasing riparian habitat, focusing on the eight "anchor watersheds" with the highest restoration potential for steelhead trout, as identified by the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration: Alameda Creek, San Francisquito Creek, Coyote Creek, Guadalupe River, Suisun Creek, Napa River, Corte Madera Creek, and Sonoma Creek. Restoration work on other creeks and rivers remains valuable when it achieves a variety of objectives.

San Francisco Bay Area - Major Efforts in the Next Five Years:

- Support protection of lands identified as essential or critical to sustaining biological diversity (Conservation Lands Network) and lands identified as critical wildlife linkages between large areas of wildlife habitat (Critical Linkages);
- Support farmers and ranchers in their efforts to manage their lands for food production and other purposes, such as wildlife habitat, watersheds, and viewsheds, with a focus on southern Santa Clara County, Sonoma, Napa Valley, Solano, eastern Alameda County, and Brentwood (*Western Marin and coastside San Mateo are managed by the North Coast and Central Coast, respectively*);

- Make significant progress towards completion of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, San Francisco Bay Trail, and San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail;
- Support public access and recreation projects that connect urban populations, especially those underserved by parks and open space, to natural areas;
- Start construction of the Bel Marin Keys portion of the Hamilton wetland restoration project and identify a strategy for long-term management of Hamilton and Bel Marin Keys;
- Construct Dutch Slough restoration and play an active role in the protection and enhancement of the Delta within Contra Costa and Solano Counties;
- Start implementation of Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, and start construction of the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project;
- Support projects that protect lands that could allow for wetland migration as sea levels rise, by implementing the recommendations of the updated Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals.
- Help communities with urban waterfronts develop adaptation strategies to address sea level rise;
- Further the Invasive *Spartina* Project by continuing to progress towards zero-detection and promoting monitoring and management by landowners and other partners;
- Develop multi-objective, multi-habitat projects, such as Living Shorelines, that implement recommendations of the Subtidal Habitat Goals Report;
- Support efforts to restore the “anchor watersheds” in the Bay Area and reduce barriers to migration for steelhead trout;
- Develop and support integrated water management within watersheds and across the region;
- Support environmental education and interpretive programs for urban populations, including habitat restoration projects that involve students and community volunteers and/or provide for greening of urban communities; and
- Support the work of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, in order to fund restoration of bay habitats and associated public access and flood management.

Central Coast

The Conservancy’s Central Coast Region extends from northern San Mateo County to southern Santa Barbara County and includes some of the most spectacular scenery on the California coast. Throughout much of this region, agriculture is a predominant land use as evidenced by the world-class vegetable farms of San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, as well as the expansive ranch lands of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. Beautiful, pristine beaches are found along the entire stretch, many of them backed by rugged coastal mountains. As a transition zone from southern to northern California flora and fauna, the region is known for a high degree of biological diversity, and includes many threatened and endangered species, as well as plants and animals known only to this part of the state.

Due to its scenic beauty and accessibility, the Central Coast region attracts visitors from all over the world. Some of the more popular destinations are the urban waterfronts in cities such as Santa Cruz, Monterey, Carmel, Morro Bay, Pismo Beach, and Santa Barbara that provide coastal access, recreation and fishing, excellent restaurants, and other amenities. The region offers

long stretches of accessible beach along the Monterey Bay and San Luis Bay shorelines, as well as secluded pocket beaches at the mouth of many coastal streams. Dunes and mountains provide a picturesque backdrop to these beaches. Other frequently visited destinations are the mountainous hiking trails of the San Mateo and Santa Cruz coasts and the spectacular Big Sur lands of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Over 2.2 million California residents live in the five counties constituting this region, most of them in cities and towns on or near the coast. Development pressure remains an ongoing threat as more and more people are drawn to the many amenities and more relaxed life-style this region has to offer compared to the more heavily developed areas of the state. This threat presents a challenge to the Conservancy and other entities attempting to preserve the natural and scenic resources found so abundantly in the Central Coast region, necessitating a constant search for new and creative measures to accomplish our conservation goals.

Major Issues in the Central Coast

Coastal Access

Development of the Coastal Trail and public access to beaches and other protected lands remains an important goal in the Central Coast region. Demand for access continues to grow as the population of the region attracts more residents as well as visitors from other areas. There is an increasing need for visitor-serving amenities such as restrooms, staging areas, interpretive facilities, and lower-cost overnight accommodations. The Coastal Trail and regional trails that link communities to the coast benefit the region both by providing options for non-motorized transportation, while also expanding recreation opportunities and strengthening the tourist economy.

Agricultural and Working Lands

The Central Coast region is one of the state's most productive agricultural areas. In addition to their economic importance, agricultural lands, and in particular rangelands, provide a number of other values such as groundwater recharge, wildlife linkages, flood water retention, open space and scenic views. Yet agricultural lands continue to be lost as the result of development or incompatible adjacent land uses. The Conservancy maintains an active agricultural preservation program and will continue to protect working lands in the Central Coast. Acquisition of conservation easements and other conservation measures are critical to ensure continued protection of agricultural lands.

Coastal Habitat

The Central Coast supports a broad range of habitat types from wetlands, to coastal chaparral and grasslands, to redwood forests. The dunes along San Luis Bay and Monterey Bay provide a glimpse of what much of the California coast looked like historically. As elsewhere on the coast, streams and rivers and their surrounding watersheds are threatened with various types of development, as well as degraded conditions resulting from past destructive land uses or flood management actions. The Conservancy remains highly focused on preventing or repairing damage to these sensitive resources, adopting a holistic perspective that considers the needs of

species, as well as overall hydrologic, geomorphic, economic and community functions. With sea level rise and other impacts of climate change, coastal habitats will experience significant stress and change. The Conservancy will prioritize habitat preservation and restoration projects in the Central Coast which enhance the resiliency of the coastal environment and/or local communities.

Central Coast - Major Efforts in the Next Five Years:

- Continue construction of the California Coastal Trail in San Mateo County and develop a long-term regional management plan;
- Support construction of the Santa Cruz Rail Trail;
- Develop new Coastal Trail segments in northern San Luis Obispo County, and along the Gaviota Coast;
- Restore coastal streams, wetlands, and other habitats through the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program as a model of agency cooperation and efficient government;
- Restore wetland habitats and natural processes at Pescadero Marsh and Scotts Creek;
- Continue to support the collaborative integration of agriculture, wetland restoration, education and public access at Watsonville Sloughs, Elkhorn Slough, and Morro Bay;
- Protect and restore coastal rivers and streams to improve water quality, retention of flood waters, and recovery of salmonid species;
- Continue to support restoration of Upper Devereux and Goleta Sloughs in Santa Barbara County;
- Protect agricultural and working lands throughout the Central Coast;
- Promote economic development projects based on increased coastal access in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes area;
- Promote development of additional lower-cost overnight accommodations;
- Support programs that provide coastal access and environmental education throughout the central coast for underserved youth and adults.
- Assist local communities to implement adaptation projects to reduce the impacts of climate change; and
- Implement Managed Aquifer Recharge and other water supply projects to enhance streamflow for salmonids, support coastal agriculture and increase climate resiliency throughout the Central Coast.

South Coast

The South Coast region extends from Ventura County to the Mexican Border and is known for its wide, sandy beaches, dramatic mountains, moderate climate, and rich biodiversity. The region is defined by the coastal plains of several major rivers and is bounded by the steep transverse mountain ranges. Ventura County retains a large amount of coastal agriculture, in contrast to the rest of the region where the coastline is either heavily urbanized or preserved as open space. Outdoor recreation is a huge attraction in the South Coast where the beaches are inviting and the water relatively warmer than the rest of the state. Surfing is extremely popular and surfers have become important advocates for clean water and coastal protection. The South Coast region is the most densely populated area in the state, and is rich with human

resources in the form of universities, research organizations, nonprofit organizations, local governments (there are 88 cities in Los Angeles County alone), port districts, and state conservancies.

Industrial activities are a major land use along the South Coast. Oil extraction is an ongoing activity, both offshore and onshore, and electrical power plants and the state's largest ports are major features on the landscape. The large tidal wetland complexes that characterized much of the coastline in the 19th and early 20th century were sacrificed for the economic wealth that lay beneath them: oil, flat land easy to build upon, and river mouths conducive to harbor development. Military facilities, such as Camp Pendleton, Point Mugu, and Port Hueneme, are a major feature along the Southern California coast, oftentimes providing important habitat, but typically not available for public access. Southern California generates enormous wealth for the state's economy, and visitors come for the cultural attractions of Los Angeles and San Diego as well as for the respite and charm found in coastal communities like Ventura, Laguna Beach, La Jolla, and Imperial Beach.

With over 22 million people living in southern California (about 60% of the state's population); the demand for housing and urban services is the biggest stressor on the coastal environment. The challenge faced by the Conservancy in the South Coast region is to undo some of the damage to coastal habitats caused by previous land uses and change antiquated infrastructure to incorporate more environmentally sustainable designs, better able to withstand the impacts of sea level rise and climate change.

Major Issues in the South Coast

Coastal Access

While much of the South Coast is open to the public and there are numerous state and local parks offering picnic and camping facilities, there are enclaves where public access is very limited. For example, parts of the Malibu coast have little or no public access and opening up public accessways in Malibu is a high priority of the Conservancy. Development of the California Coastal Trail through the region is also an important goal, as the trail can be used for alternative transportation as well as purely recreational purposes. In addition, the Conservancy will continue its work to complete river parkways, such as those along the Ventura, Santa Clara, and Santa Ana rivers. Filling gaps in these statewide and regional trail systems and making connections with other trails and public transportation will continue to be priorities for our work in the region, along with providing affordable overnight lodging and convenient parking for lower-income visitors. Finally, the Conservancy also funds educational and interpretive centers, staging areas, piers, picnic areas, wheelchair accessible ramps and restrooms, and other recreational amenities that are accessible to urban populations and connect people to nature.

Coastal Habitat

Historically, the South Coast was characterized by large tidal wetland complexes, wide flood plains and rich riparian corridors along coastal rivers and streams. Unfortunately, much of this

habitat has been destroyed for urban development and flood control. The Conservancy has therefore invested significant resources and staff time towards support of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, a broad-based partnership of 18 state and federal agencies working in concert with scientists, local governments, and others to improve coordination, pool resources, and advance the recovery of wetlands in the region. The Conservancy has also helped provide technical assistance to help inform critical restoration design and management decisions, such as historical ecology studies and development of assessment and monitoring methods. Restoration and enhancement of wetlands and other regionally-important habitat, particularly through the lens of future climate change and sea level rise, will continue to be a focus of the Conservancy's work. Large, active restoration projects are underway at Ormond Beach in Ventura, Ballona Wetlands in Los Angeles, Los Cerritos in Long Beach, and in the Tijuana River Estuary in Imperial Beach.

Urban Greening and Waterfronts

The extent of Southern California's dense urbanization provides unique challenges and opportunities. Finding new ways to provide infrastructure that serves the needs of urban residents while also sustaining and creating valuable wildlife habitat is critical to the Conservancy's work in the region. The Conservancy is in the vanguard of both urban greening and living shoreline approaches to urban infrastructure. To boost urban greening efforts in Los Angeles County, the Conservancy dedicated its fourth round of Proposition 1 funding exclusively to projects of that type within the County. Ultimately, a total of 12 projects were selected for funding, for a total of over \$11 million. In Ventura, Santa Monica and Cardiff, the Conservancy is working on projects to restore natural beach dunes that will protect urban infrastructure and be more resilient to sea level rise. The Conservancy's efforts to restore and sustain coastal habitat will require continued efforts to change the way urban infrastructure is engineered so that more efficient and sustainable methods can be implemented. Providing and increasing access to natural areas in urban settings is another critical component of the Conservancy's work, and it will continue to seek innovative ways to establish community green areas such as urban forests and open spaces. As concerns over climate change increase, the need for holistic approaches that can integrate a range of needs will be paramount, and will drive much of the Conservancy's efforts in the South Coast.

Finally, the Conservancy will continue to build on its work to revitalize urban waterfronts by developing projects that increase public access, provide public education, and promote sustainable commercial fishing practices.

South Coast - Major Efforts in the Next Five Years:

- Secure funding for and implement the Matilija Dam removal project;
- Begin opening up access points along the Santa Clara River as the next phase in establishing the Parkway, enabling public access and agricultural activities to coexist along the river;
- Complete the restoration plan for Ormond Beach and obtain funding to restore the tidal wetland;
- Complete a comprehensive public access plan for coastal accessways in the City of Malibu and open at least one new accessway;

- Complete the environmental documentation and public review for the Ballona wetlands restoration, and commence the first phase of the project;
- Complete the planning phase for several green infrastructure projects in LA County and begin implementation;
- Complete the environmental document for the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project and prepare final restoration plans;
- Promote development of additional lower-cost overnight accommodations;
- Complete the California Coastal Trail in San Diego County and construct new trail in critical areas in Los Angeles County;
- Install at least one Coastal Trail Major Mile Marker in each South Coast county;
- Support programs that provide coastal access and environmental education throughout the south coast for underserved youth and adults;
- Prioritize projects that improve the natural environment for disadvantaged communities and other underserved populations;
- Assist local communities to plan for and implement adaptation projects to reduce the impacts of climate change, particularly sea level rise;
- Resolve sediment management issues in the Tijuana River estuary;
- Secure funding to complete phase 2 of the Surfers Point Managed Retreat project, and undertake additional dune restoration/living shoreline projects throughout the region;
- Continue to participate in the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project; and
- Complete the Santa Ana River Parkway and Open Space Plan, enhance natural habitats along the Santa Ana River watershed, and construct new segments of the Santa Ana River Trail.

The Next Five Years

Based on our analysis of the issues facing coastal California, this plan identifies specific goals and numeric objectives that the Coastal Conservancy will achieve over the next five years. The purpose of the goals and objectives is to help the Conservancy prioritize its work, allocating both staff resources and funding to projects that achieve these objectives. The numerical targets for objectives are divided by region: North Coast, San Francisco Bay Area, Central Coast, and South Coast, including Santa Ana River.

This Strategic Plan sets ambitious objectives based on the availability of funding to support our work. For purposes of developing numerical targets, the Conservancy assumed the following funding sources:

- Appropriation of \$4 million per year of Habitat Conservation Funds until 2019;
- Appropriation of about \$500,000 per year to support Explore the Coast grants;
- About \$1,000,000 a year from the Violation Remediation Account and the Coastal Trust Fund for specific projects;
- Appropriation of \$30 million (all of the remaining) Proposition 1 funds for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, watershed protection and restoration projects;
- Appropriation of the remaining \$40 million of Proposition 84 funds over the next five years for its legislated purposes; about half of the remaining funding is geographically designated, such as Santa Ana River, Monterey Bay, and San Francisco Bay Area; and
- Approval in 2018 and appropriation over the following decade of approximately \$150-250 million in additional funding that supports the wide array of Conservancy programs. Without this assumption of additional funding, the numerical targets for public access objectives, such as trails and recreational facilities, would be at or close to zero, and the targets for habitat and watershed protection and restoration would be lower than shown.

Targets for each objective were determined by the Conservancy's regional managers through consultation with project staff, key stakeholders, and project partners in each County. The targets are based on what can be achieved in each region given the opportunities and constraints that exist. For example, acres of habitat restoration that can be accomplished are grounded in availability of restorable lands, regional restoration goals, and understanding of the schedules for specific projects in each region. The numbers were also based on grant applications already submitted to the Conservancy and the Conservancy's anticipated future commitments to ongoing, large-scale projects. Conservancy staff consulted statewide and regional plans, including: Completing the Coastal Trail, regional coastal trail plans, San Francisco Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report, Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Work Plan, San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan, Conservation Lands Network, San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Report, plans and gap analyses for the San Francisco Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail, Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plans for coastal watersheds, and local conservation, trail, transportation, and land use plans. An additional factor considered was staffing levels and workload capacity.

The first three goals are for broad programs that cover the entire California coast, while recognizing the diversity that exists between major regions:

- Explore the Coast
- Protect and Restore the Coast
- Climate Ready

The next two goals focus on three legislatively mandated geographic programs within the Conservancy:

- Santa Ana River
- San Francisco Bay Area

A final goal provides overarching objectives for the Conservancy as an agency, such as continuing our commitment to transparency and communication, providing leadership on the coast, promoting environmental equity and justice, adapting our organizational structure, and implementing a sustainable funding strategy for the Conservancy's programs and operations.

Explore the Coast

The Conservancy is committed to improving the ability of all Californians to access and enjoy the coast. The projects under the auspices of the Conservancy's Explore the Coast Program include:

- Completion of the California Coastal Trail, which is both a recreational feature and in some areas a means of alternative transportation.
- Construction of new trails and accessways, educational centers, and other amenities (such as restrooms, parking lots, interpretive signs, and overlooks).
- Efforts to reduce barriers to visiting the coast, such as the difficulty of transportation, a lack of information about coastal amenities, the cost of overnight accommodations, and the accessibility of coastal sites for persons with disabilities.
- Educational programs and interpretive events, especially those that provide coastal experiences to underserved populations.

The public access goals also include the Conservancy's work to revitalize working waterfronts. These projects include expanding public access but also may involve investments to maintain commercial fishing infrastructure. All access projects will need to be planned to consider climate change impacts, and we expect that a continued major focus of our waterfront revitalization work will be to help communities plan for and adapt to sea level rise.

The Strategic Plan contains specific objectives for planning and constructing lower cost overnight accommodation projects and implementing programs called for in the lower cost overnight accommodations plan that will be completed in 2018. This plan will identify opportunities, priorities, strategies and potential partners to expand a variety of lower cost overnight accommodations on public or protected lands along the coast to serve lower income Californians.

The Conservancy works closely with the Coastal Commission to promote public access to the coast. We will continue to improve and enhance this partnership during the next five years as a key strategy to ensure efficiency and coordination of effort. There are many opportunities for our agencies to improve collaboration on coastal access projects, including completion of the California Coastal Trail and development of new coastal accessways.

1. Develop the California Coastal Trail as a major recreational amenity, tourist attraction, and alternative transportation system.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Bay Area	Total
1A	Implement and support projects to promote awareness and use of the California Coastal Trail, including the Explore the Coast web app.	Projects	5	5	4	2	16
1B	Complete and maintain map of existing Coastal Trail network.	Project					1
1C	Design new trail segments.	Miles	8	8	2		18
1D	Construct new trail segments.	Miles	10	8	2		20
1E	Assist with projects that secure real property or property interests to facilitate the development of the California Coastal Trail.	Projects	3	2	2		7
1F	Ensure there is at least one California Coastal Trail sign on each segment of existing Coastal Trail.	Percent Segments Signed					100

2. Expand the system of coastal public accessways, open-space areas, parks, and inland trails that connect to the coast.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Total
2A	Implement projects that expand or enhance opportunities for access for people with disabilities to and along the coast and coastal trails.	Projects	6	8	2	16
2B	Open coastal areas that are currently inaccessible or closed to public use.	Projects	8	4	2	14
2C	Design facilities to increase and enhance coastal recreational opportunities, such as picnic areas, piers, parking lots, restrooms, and natural play spaces.	Designs	4	5	4	13

2D	Fund construction of new facilities, or reconstruction of dilapidated and unsafe facilities to increase and enhance coastal recreational opportunities, such as picnic areas, piers, parking lots, restrooms, and natural play spaces.	Facilities	4	5	4	13
2E	Design new regional trails and river parkways that connect inland populations to the coast.	Plans	2	2	4	8
2F	Construct new regional trails and river parkways that connect inland populations to the coast.	Miles	2	5	3	10
2G	Acquire land to allow for development of new coastal accessways.	Projects	2	2	1	5

3. Revitalize coastal and inland waterfronts that provide significant public benefits and promote sustainable economic development.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Bay Area	Total
3A	Develop waterfront revitalization plans that increase accessibility, support fishing, encourage economic revitalization, promote excellence in urban design, enhance cultural resources, and are resilient to a changing climate.	Plans	1	3	1	2	7
3B	Implement waterfront revitalization projects that increase accessibility, support fishing, encourage economic revitalization, promote excellence in urban design, enhance cultural resources, and are resilient to a changing climate.	Projects	1	1	1	2	5
3C	Complete a plan to expand lower-cost overnight accommodations on public lands along the coast.	Plans					1
3D	Design or plan a variety of lower-cost overnight accommodations along the coast.	Rooms/ Campsites	50	60	50		160
3E	Create a variety of lower-cost overnight accommodations along the coast.	Rooms/ Campsites	50	95	50		195
3F	Develop programs to achieve objectives identified in the lower cost overnight accommodations plan.	Programs					3

4. Expand environmental education efforts to improve public understanding, use, and stewardship of coastal resources.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Bay Area	Total
4A	Support educational programs and interpretive events that improve public understanding and promote stewardship of coastal resources.	Program	25	20	40	20	105
4B	Support the design and installation of interpretive or educational displays and exhibits related to coastal, watershed, and ocean-resource education, maritime history, and climate-change.	Exhibits	5	10	15		30
4C	Construct or improve regional environmental education centers that educate the public about environmental issues affecting the coast and inland watersheds.	Centers	1	1	1		3

Protect and Restore the Coast

The Conservancy works to ensure the coast is protected and restored for existing and future generations. The overall goal is to support projects and activities that protect and enhance the coast's scenic, natural, and agricultural resources. Objectives include preservation of open space; restoration or enhancement of coastal wetlands and other wildlife habitat; projects to reduce barriers to fish migration; watershed planning and restoration, including projects to improve water quality; and protection of working lands, including farmland, rangeland, and forests. These natural and scenic resources of the coast are vital to the state's economy and quality of life, as well as to the wildlife that depends upon them.

Climate change will be a driving factor affecting all resource conservation activities in the future, and is further addressed in the Climate Ready section that follows. Another ongoing challenge is the limited availability of funding for management of habitat restoration and land acquisition projects. Management needs should be addressed upfront in our projects to protect and restore the coast. Long-term, sustained conservation will continue to require partnerships with nongovernmental organizations to manage lands and reduce operational costs.

5. Protect significant coastal resource properties, including farmland, rangeland, and forests.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Total
5A	Protect significant coastal and watershed resource properties.	Acres	5000	4000	500	9500
5B	Protect working lands, including farmland, rangeland and forests.	Acres	10000	3000	0	13000
5C	Implement projects that preserve fish and wildlife corridors between core habitat areas along the coast and from coastal to inland habitat areas.	Projects	8	4	4	16

6. Enhance biological diversity, improve water quality, habitat, and other natural resources within coastal watersheds.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Total
6A	Develop plans for the restoration and enhancement of coastal habitats, including coastal wetlands and intertidal areas, stream corridors, dunes, coastal terraces, coastal sage scrub, forests, and coastal prairie.	Plans	10	10	15	35

6B	Restore or enhance coastal habitats, including coastal wetlands and intertidal areas, stream corridors, dunes, coastal sage scrub, coastal terraces, forests, and coastal prairie.	Acres	2000	150	100	2250
6C	Develop plans to preserve and enhance coastal watersheds and floodplains, including plans to improve fish passage.	Plans	15	10	25	50
6D	Implement projects that preserve and enhance coastal watersheds and floodplains.	Projects	15	10	15	40
6E	Implement projects to restore fish habitat including projects to improve fish passage, ensure sufficient instream flow, and provide in stream habitat and favorable water temperatures.	Projects	20	15	10	45
6F	Complete plans to improve water quality to benefit coastal and ocean resources.	Plans	3	5	20	28
6G	Implement projects to improve water quality to benefit coastal and ocean resources.	Projects	5	5	20	30
6H	Implement projects to support the recovery of the southern sea otter.	Projects	0	10	3	13

7. Enhance coastal working lands, including farmland, rangeland, and forests.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Total
7A	Develop plans for projects that foster the long-term viability of coastal working lands, including projects to assist farmers, ranchers, and timber producers to reduce impacts of their operations on wildlife habitat and water quality.	Plans	20	10	0	30
7B	Implement projects that foster the long-term viability of coastal working lands, including projects to assist farmers, ranchers, and timber producers to reduce impacts of their operations on wildlife habitat and water quality.	Projects	12	5	0	17

Climate Ready

The Conservancy's Climate Ready Program provides leadership and fiscal and technical support to local agencies, nonprofits, and other partners to: better understand vulnerabilities to sea level rise and other climate change impacts; plan multi-objective adaptation strategies along the coast; and implement projects that use natural infrastructure as an adaptation strategy to protect natural resources and public access into the future. The projects the Conservancy supports are intended to serve as models for coastal communities throughout California.

The Conservancy will continue to work closely with the Commission and BCDC to support projects that improve understanding of local and regional climate change impacts. In concert with these partner agencies, the Conservancy supports local and regional adaptation planning to protect coastal resources in ways that contribute to the resiliency of the natural and built environments.

8. Enhance the resiliency of coastal communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change.

	Objective Description	Unit	North Coast	Central Coast	South Coast	Bay Area	Total
8A	Conduct vulnerability assessments and develop adaptation plans to identify specific projects to address sea level rise and other impacts of climate change.	Study	1	1	4	6	12
8B	Plan and design adaptation projects to increase resilience to sea level rise and other climate change impacts.	Plans	4	4	10	8	26
8C	Implement projects to increase resilience to sea level rise or other climate change impacts using nature-based solutions and other multi-benefit strategies.	Projects	5	8	10	10	33

Santa Ana River

The Santa Ana River Conservancy Program was added to the Conservancy's enabling legislation in 2014 to address the resource and recreational goals of the Santa Ana River corridor, which the Conservancy has long been a partner in. The legislation calls for the Conservancy to create an advisory group and prepare a Santa Ana River Parkway and Open Space Plan to determine the policies and priorities for conserving the Santa Ana River and its watershed; identify underused, existing public open spaces and recommend ways to provide better public use and enjoyment in those areas; and identify and prioritize additional low-impact recreational and open-space needs, including additional or upgraded facilities and parks that may be necessary or desirable. Priority is to be given to river-related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river and in parts of the river channel that can be improved without infringing on water quality, water supply, and necessary flood control. This planning process is well underway, with a plan to be completed by the spring of 2018, followed by implementation of the habitat protection and enhancement projects and the public access, recreation, and education projects.

9. Improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs within the Santa Ana River Parkway.

	Objective Description	Unit	South Coast
9A	Design new sections of the Santa Ana River Trail.	Miles	10
9B	Construct new sections of the Santa Ana River Trail.	Miles	12
9C	Plan public access facilities within the Santa Ana River Parkway.	Projects	6
9D	Construct public access facilities within the Santa Ana River Parkway.	Projects	6
9E	Implement projects that create, expand, or improve environmental educational or interpretive programs within the Santa Ana River Parkway.	Projects	6

10. Protect and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance in the Santa Ana River watershed.

	Objective Description	Unit	South Coast
10A	Protect natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources.	Acres	5
10B	Plan for the enhancement of natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources.	Plans	6
10C	Enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources.	Acres	4

San Francisco Bay Area

The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program was added to the Conservancy's enabling legislation in October 1997 to address resource and recreational goals within the entire nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program has four major goals: 1) improving public access; 2) conserving and enhancing habitat; 3) implementing the Coastal Act, San Francisco Bay Plan, and other adopted plans; and 4) providing recreational and educational opportunities in open space and natural areas to urban populations. While there is substantial overlap in the goals and objectives between the coastal regions and the San Francisco Bay Area, the Bay Area Conservancy Program is treated as its own section within the strategic plan because of its unique legislative mandate and jurisdiction.

11. Identify and prioritize long-term resource and recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area.

	Objective Description	Unit	Bay Area
11A	Identify and prioritize resource and recreational goals, including projects that protect and enhance natural habitats and other open-space lands of regional significance and those that improve public access.	Plans	2

12. Protect and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance in the Bay Area.

	Objective Description	Unit	Bay Area
12A	Protect tidal wetlands, managed wetlands, seasonal wetlands, riparian habitat, and subtidal habitat.	Acres	1600
12B	Protect wildlife habitat, connecting corridors, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional significance.	Acres	6500
12C	Develop plans for enhancement of tidal wetlands, managed wetlands, seasonal wetlands, upland habitat, and subtidal habitat.	Plans	5
12D	Enhance tidal wetlands, managed wetlands, seasonal wetlands, upland habitat, and subtidal habitat.	Acres	4000
12E	Develop plans for enhancement of riparian and riverine habitat or other watershed functions and processes for the benefit of wildlife or water quality, including removal of barriers to fish passage or ensuring sufficient instream flow.	Plans	4
12F	Enhance riparian and riverine habitat or other watershed functions and processes for the benefit of wildlife or water quality, including removal of barriers to fish passage or projects that ensure sufficient instream flow.	Projects	10
12G	Eradicate non-native invasive species that threaten important habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area.	Projects	1

13. Improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs in and around San Francisco Bay, along the coast, the ridgelines, in urban open spaces, and natural areas.

	Objective Description	Unit	Bay Area
13A	Develop plans for projects that provide recreational facilities such as picnic areas, docks and piers, campgrounds, parking lots, interpretive signs, interpretive or educational centers, and natural play spaces.	Plans	3
13B	Implement projects that provide recreational facilities such as picnic and staging areas, docks and piers, campgrounds, parking lots, interpretive signs, interpretive or educational centers, and natural play spaces.	Projects	6
13C	Complete acquisition projects that increase the amount of land accessible to the public or provide corridors for trails.	Acres	1700
13D	Plan segments of the San Francisco Bay Trail.	Miles	10
13E	Construct segments of the San Francisco Bay Trail.	Miles	15
13F	Plan segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.	Miles	25
13G	Construct segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.	Miles	9
13H	Develop plans for regionally significant public access trails and community connectors, including links between the Bay Trail, Ridge Trail, Water Trail, and Coastal Trail, and links between regional trails and urban communities.	Plans	2
13I	Construct regionally significant public trails and community connectors, including links between the Bay Trail, Ridge Trail, Water Trail, and Coastal Trail, and links between regional trails and urban communities.	Projects	2
13J	Designate launch sites for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.	Sites	25
13K	Enhance designated launch sites for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.	Sites	10
13L	Implement projects that expand opportunities for access for people with disabilities.	Projects	9

14. Protect Bay Area working lands and support farmers and ranchers in implementing stewardship of the natural resources on their lands.

	Objective Description	Unit	Bay Area
14A	Protect working lands, including farmland, rangeland and forests.	Acres	1000
14B	Implement projects that assist farmers and ranchers to steward the natural resources on their lands.	Projects	4

Overarching

This Strategic Plan articulates a vision and priorities for conservation and coastal access. To achieve the goals and objectives laid out in the plan, the Conservancy must provide leadership, take part in collaborative efforts with multiple partners, and support the work of partner organizations. The Conservancy alone will not succeed; we rely on hundreds of other public agencies and nongovernmental organizations working to achieve shared goals. Three new objectives reflect the need for leadership and collaboration in all of our work.

The vast majority of Californians state that the coast is personally important to them. The Conservancy's ability to achieve the goals in the Strategic Plan is thanks to the support of the people of California and our responsibility is to deliver results that benefit them and future generations of Californians. In particular, the Conservancy is dedicated to serving those who have faced systemic inequities, such as disadvantaged communities, persons with disabilities, and tribes. The Conservancy's work to restore watersheds and habitats, increase resilience to climate change impacts, and improve public access must promote environmental equity and justice. Three new overarching objectives and numerical targets reflect this commitment.

From an operational vantage point, the Conservancy will have to develop new sources of funding for our projects and our operations to implement this strategic plan. We will need to structure our programs and reorganize our staff resources to match these new funding sources. The Conservancy will continue to foster a culture of entrepreneurial collaboration, innovative partnering and leadership, skill assessment and enhancement for technical assistance, and grant writing to support the staff necessary to advance the agency's mission. As an agency whose projects and staff are funded with public dollars, we strive to be transparent and accountable, sharing information about our work and accomplishments with stakeholders and the general public through multiple outreach tools.

15. Provide leadership, partnership, and assistance to organizations engaged in conservation and public access within the Conservancy's jurisdiction.

	Objective Description
15A	Articulate and communicate a vision and priorities for conservation and public access along the California coast and ocean, in coastal watersheds, and in the San Francisco Bay Area.
15B	Participate in or spearhead regional and statewide collaboratives that further Conservancy goals and objectives and support the work of partner organizations.
15C	Support partner organizations through project facilitation, technical assistance, grant writing, workshops, webinars, and the development and sharing of scientific and management resources.

16. Ensure that the work of the Conservancy promotes environmental equity and justice.

	Objective Description	Unit	Total
16A	Prioritize projects for funding that are located in disadvantaged communities or directly benefit disadvantaged communities.	Percent of Funding	35
16B	Increase the resilience to climate change impacts of communities along the coast of California or in the San Francisco Bay Area that lack capacity due to systemic inequities.	Projects	15
16C	Increase coastal access for all Californians, by supporting organizations that provide coastal experiences to underserved populations, by increasing physical access for persons with disabilities, by providing information about visitor-serving amenities on the coast, and by reducing barriers such as the cost of lodging.	Projects	50

17. Implement a sustainable funding strategy for the Conservancy's projects and programs.

	Objective Description
17A	Conduct annual evaluations of the Conservancy's budget against its long-term financial plan.
17B	Develop and evaluate progress towards achieving annual funding targets, including support funds, funding for programs and projects, and matching funds.

18. Organize the Conservancy's structure to align staff resources with the Conservancy's sources of funding.

	Objective Description
18A	Develop and continue to adapt the organizational structure to align staff resources with the long-term funding strategy.
18B	Maintain and consistently upgrade the Conservancy project database and complete required reporting to the Legislature, Resources Agency, and control agencies.

19. Ensure full transparency and accountability, including external communications about the Conservancy's purposes, actions, and accomplishments.

	Objective Description
19A	Use the Conservancy's website, social media presence, annual reports, and other outreach tools to ensure transparency and improve external communications about the Conservancy's work and accomplishments.
19B	Use our mapping tools and project data for planning, decision making, and reporting.

Appendix A – Conservancy Statutory Authorities and Programs

Coastal Access (Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 31400 et seq.)

The California Constitution and the Coastal Act require that public access to and along the shoreline be maximized. Widespread concern about losing public access to the coast led in 1972 to passage of Proposition 20, which created the Coastal Commission, and to the enactment of the Coastal Act in 1976. PRC Section 30001.5(c), a provision of the Coastal Act, declares the state's goal to "maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the Coastal Zone consistent with sound resource conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners."

The Coastal Conservancy is directed to "have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline. . ." (PRC Section 31400), and the Conservancy may award grants and undertake projects to acquire and develop land for access, and provide assistance to nonprofit organizations and public agencies (PRC Sections 31400.1, 31400.2, 31400.3). The Conservancy is also charged with coordinating the development of the California Coastal Trail, in consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the California Coastal Commission, and with helping to expand inland trail systems that link to the Coastal Trail (PRC Sections 31408, 31409).

In 2002, the Legislature declared that in order to prevent the potential loss of public accessways to and along the state's coastline, it is in the best interest of the state to accept all offers to dedicate real property that protect open space or have the potential to provide access to the shoreline and view areas, or that provide a connection to other public properties or easements. These offers to dedicate frequently result from conditions specified in development permits issued by the Coastal Commission. The Legislature has mandated that the Conservancy accept any outstanding offers to dedicate public accessways that are not accepted by others within 90 days of their expiration dates (Public Resources Code 31402.2).

Natural Resource Enhancement (PRC Sections 31251 et seq.)

The Conservancy enhances coastal resources that, because of indiscriminate dredging and filling, improper location of improvements, natural or human-induced events, or incompatible land uses, have suffered loss of natural or scenic values (PRC Sections 31251). Under this authority, the Conservancy preserves and increases fish and wildlife habitat and other resource values through public actions, including grants to acquire and restore resource degraded sites.

Watershed Restoration (PRC Section 31220)

In order to improve and protect coastal and marine water quality and habitats, the Conservancy may undertake coastal watershed and coastal and marine habitat water quality, sediment management, and living marine resources protection and restoration projects. Projects implemented under this authority require consultation with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Urban Waterfronts (PRC Section 31300 et seq.)

In enacting the Urban Waterfront Restoration Act of 1981 (Public Resources Code Section 31300 et seq.), the Legislature determined that many urban waterfront areas in California "are in need of restoration in order to be the vital economic and cultural component of the community which they once were," (PRC Section 31301), and it provided the Conservancy with authority to undertake projects and award grants for restoration of urban waterfronts. The Conservancy is directed to coordinate the

activities of all other state agencies and relevant federal agencies with programs affecting urban waterfronts (PRC Section 31302).

The Conservancy may support projects and activities that are compatible with the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of ocean, coastal, or watershed resources, or that facilitate environmental education related to these resources. And, the Conservancy may undertake activities and to support events or infrastructure related to coastal, watershed, or ocean resource education and maritime history (PRC Section 31316).

Preservation of Agricultural Land (PRC Section 31150 et seq.)

The Conservancy has authority to undertake projects and award grants to prevent the loss of agricultural land and to sustain continued agricultural production (PRC Sections 31150, 31156). These projects can include acquisition of fee title or easements and agricultural improvements.

Reservation of Significant Coastal Sites (PRC Sections 31350 et seq.)

The Conservancy may acquire, hold, protect, and use interests in coastal resource lands that would otherwise be lost to public use (PRC Sections 31350), in order to preserve them for purposes of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, the California Coastal Act, the San Francisco Bay Plan, and other legislation (PRC Sections 31351). The Conservancy may also award a grant to a nonprofit organization or public agency for these purposes, and offer technical assistance (PRC Sections 31352).

Solving Land-Use and Development Controversies (PRC Sections 31200 et seq.)

The Coastal Conservancy undertakes projects for the purpose of restoring areas that, because of scattered ownerships, poor lot layout, inadequate park and open space, incompatible land uses, or other conditions, are adversely affecting the coastal environment or are impeding orderly development (PRC Section 31200). The Conservancy assists local governments to direct new development to appropriate sites through public actions, including transfer of development, lot consolidation and revised subdivision, hazard mitigation, and open-space acquisition financing.

San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (PRC Sections 31160 et seq.)

The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program was created to address the resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy has authority in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area to achieve the following goals (PRC Sections 31162):

- Completion of regional trails (such as the San Francisco Bay Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, California Coastal Trail, and San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail), consistent with the rights of private property owners and without significant adverse impacts on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive habitats and wildlife.
- Completion of local trails that connect population centers and public facilities, such as parks or recreational centers.
- Provision of recreational and educational facilities, such as interpretive centers, picnic areas, staging areas, and campgrounds.
- Protection of lands, through fee title acquisition, conservation or agricultural easements, or other methods) that provide wildlife habitat, connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other regionally significant resources, such as agriculture.
- Restoration or enhancement of habitats, corridors, and watersheds, such as wetland and riparian habitat restoration and invasive species projects.

- Provision of projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes.
- Facilitation of environmental education related to ocean, coastal, bay, or watershed resources, such as exhibits or events or the development of amenities and infrastructure (PRC Section 31165).

The Conservancy is charged with (PRC Section 31163):

- Identifying resource and recreational goals for the Bay Area, in cooperation with local and regional public agencies, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, land trusts, and others;
- Supporting interagency actions and public/private partnerships in order to achieve the goals outlined above and generate support for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program; and
- Giving highest priority to projects that are supported by adopted plans, are multijurisdictional or serve a regional constituency, can be implemented in a timely way, have benefits that could be lost if not quickly implemented, and include matching funds.

Santa Ana River Conservancy Program (PRC Section 31170 et.seq.)

Effective January 2015, the Santa Ana River Conservancy Program was created within the Conservancy to address the resource and recreational goals of the Santa Ana River corridor.

The Conservancy is charged with preparing a Santa Ana River Parkway and Open Space Plan to determine the policies and priorities for conserving the Santa Ana River and its watershed; identify underused, existing public open spaces and recommend ways to provide better public use and enjoyment in those areas; and identify and prioritize additional low-impact recreational and open-space needs, including additional or upgraded facilities and parks that may be necessary or desirable.

The Conservancy has the authority to help achieve the following goals:

- Recreational opportunities, open space, trails, wildlife habitat and species restoration, enhancement, and protection, wetland restoration and protection, agricultural land restoration and protection, protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters in the Santa Ana River for all beneficial uses, related educational use, and natural floodwater conveyance.
- Public access to, enjoyment of, and enhancement of recreational and educational experience on, program lands in a manner consistent with the protection of land and natural resources and economic resources in the area.

Climate Change (PRC Section 31113)

Effective January 2013, the Conservancy's enabling legislation provides express authority to undertake projects and award grants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. The Conservancy is directed to maximize public benefits, including, but not limited to, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, reducing hazards to harbors and ports, preserving and enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, conserving biodiversity, and providing recreational opportunities.

The legislature expressed its intent that the Conservancy have adequate authority to work with local governments and private entities to address the effects of climate change on coastal resources, public and private, natural and built, including, but not limited to, coastal beaches, ports, urban waterfronts, infrastructure, the ocean, riparian areas and watersheds, fisheries, forests, wetlands, and public and

private real property; and declared that the Conservancy's participation can contribute to the resiliency of the natural and built environments and facilitate migration of plant and animal species as they move to adapt.

Environmental Education (PRC Section 31119)

The Conservancy may undertake or award grants for educational projects and programs for pupils in kindergarten through grade 12 that relate to the preservation, protection, enhancement, and maintenance of coastal resources.

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Appendix B – 2013-2018 Strategic Plan Accomplishments

(to be added to final Strategic Plan)

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Appendix C - Status of Conservancy Funding

(to be added after financial report to Conservancy Board on September 28, 2017)

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